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Focus and Convergence through a Comprehensive Approach: but which among the many?

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Name of Author
Cecilia Hull

Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI
Division of Defence Analysis
Department of Peace Support Operations
SE 16440 Stockholm, Sweden
Ph: +46 8 5550 3818

Point of Contact
Cecilia Hull

Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI
Department of Peace Support Operations
SE 16440 Stockholm, Sweden
Ph: +46 8 5550 3818
cecilia.hull@foi.se

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14. ABSTRACT
Many contemporary military operations are launched in conflict environments which necessitate the application of instruments additional to the military to establish peace and security. So-called ?multifunctional? or ?multidimensional? operations require new approaches to Command and Control (C2). C2 of all the participants in such operations by one organisation is not possible. Rather, focus and convergence will need to arise from a mere willingness to collaborate, based on a perception of mutual benefit and interdependencies. This understanding has led to the idea of the Comprehensive Approach (CA). This paper maps and explores various definitions of CA and ideas of how it could and should be implemented. In particular, this paper outlines the contrast between interpreting CA as a mindset or as a structure or process. This paper also describes the differences in approaches seeking out ?comprehensiveness? at a national, inter-agency or intra-agency level. How CA is interpreted has an effect on how tools to perform and measure it can be developed, as well as for how educating and training on the approach should be conducted. As CA is regarded as an essential tool for achieving collective focus and convergence in modern, multifunctional operations, exploring these differences is necessary.

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Abstract

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Focus and Convergence through a Comprehensive Approach: but which among the many?

Cecilia Hull, Swedish Defence Research Agency

Introduction

Many contemporary military operations are launched in conflict environments which require the application of instruments other than the military to establish peace and security. Since the end of the Cold War, the general understanding of what constitutes a threat to security has been expanded to include not only military threats but also other forms of challenges. Environmental degradation, the illegal production of drugs, corruption within law enforcement agencies and disillusioned youths without the expectation of employment are merely a few of all the factors that are now considered both national security threats, as well as factors threatening global peace and security. As part of this, the concept of security has also been expanded to include not only hard, national defence-related security but also human security – the understanding that the welfare of vulnerable populations is essential in addressing global insecurities.[1]

A natural consequence of this acknowledgement has been the further recognition that security-building and peacekeeping initiatives cannot work in isolation of broader development strategies (spanning from poverty reduction to human rights advocacy and promoting good governance). Rather, all peace-supporting activities need to be undertaken with long-term and all-inclusive perspectives that take in the efforts of a range of actors, such as the military, police, development organisations, governance advisors, political envoys and others. The military instrument forms only one – even if an important – part of a broader context and functions alongside other instruments in the fight against poverty, promotion of human rights or other tasks needed to achieve sustainable peace.

The recognition that development and security are closely linked is not new. The complementarity of military-led peacekeeping and broader civilian-led peacebuilding has long been acknowledged. The main difference is that these efforts were previously considered sequential steps: peacebuilding was something that naturally followed peacekeeping and development initiatives would commence once a sufficient level of "peace" and stability had been established. The experiences made during the past decades nevertheless showed that the clear points of transition, where peacekeeping could naturally transcend to peacebuilding, were difficult to find. As a result of this, the relationship between security and development initiatives has come to be understood not as chronologically complementary but as functionally complementary: security cannot be achieved without certain advancements in development, and development initiatives will fail unless there is a certain degree of security.[2]

By the beginning of the 21st century, the international community had come to experience that its security and development efforts had not had the effects originally intended.[3] The number of peace support operations had once again increased after a downturn in the mid-1990s, and a lot of resources were spent by multilateral organisations and individual donors in support of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Despite successful "on paper", the missions were not delivering intended effects, resulting in a relapse to conflict.[4] A variety of reports exploring the failure of peacekeeping testified that this could be attributed, at least partly, to poor coordination and collaboration between the actors engaged in these initiatives.[5] In particular, it was made evident that the lack of shared strategic vision between initiatives was resulting in a waste of

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[1] See for example, DFID. 2005. Fighting poverty to build a safer world: A strategy for security and development. UK Department for International Development, March 2005

[2] Rosgaard, Ebbe. 2008. "The Danish Comprehensive Approach", in Labarre (ed.), Proceedings from the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) Seminar 13–14 March 2008, Baltic Defence College, Estonia

[3] See the so-called "Brahimi report" – United Nations General Assembly. 2000. Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. A/55/305–S/2000/809. New York: General Assembly and Security Council

[4] The former UN under-secretary for peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, has described it as: "Successful operations, as it were, in which the patient dies." Statement by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary for UN Peacekeeping to the 'Challenges Project', London, UK, March 2005

[5] *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*. United Nations, A/55/305–S/2000/809; Collier et al. 2003. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil Wars and Development Policy*. World Bank

resources, poor effectiveness and lack of sustainability.[6] As a result, an extensive debate arose regarding how to adjust these problems.

It was amid these discussions that the idea of a *Comprehensive Approach* (CA) arose. The sentiment being derived from two primary rationales: the insight that there is a *mutual dependency between security and development efforts* and the understanding that managing these interdependencies is essential to achieving *efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability*.[7] The search for improved effectiveness and sustainability, as well as cost-efficiency, has since then resulted in a range of CA concepts, which primarily have been focused on "integration", "coherence" or "collaboration" as means to achieve this.

Purpose of this paper

CA has become a much-used term in conflict and crisis management. Despite being frequently talked about, the term lacks definition and consensus and there is no universally accepted definition of what CA really is, rather, a range of interpretations exist

How the CA-concept is interpreted has an effect on how tools to implement and measure it can be developed, as well as on how educating and training on the approach should be conducted. As CA is regarded an essential tool for achieving collective focus and convergence in modern, multifunctional operations, exploring these differences is necessary.

The purpose of this paper is to help clarify the most fundamental points of departure for CA, as well as to reflect over why there are varying interpretations and what effect the different interpretations have on implementing CA. The purpose is not to map all definitions and interpretations but to provide an overview of the most common denominators as well as the major differences with regard to both interpretation and implementation.

1. CA – General Definitions and Interpretations

Today there is no single definition of CA, or corresponding concepts, accepted by all relevant actors. Due to the rationales presented in the introduction, several efforts have nevertheless been made by a number of organisations (e.g. the UN or EU), as well as individual states, to improve integration or the coordination of efforts. This has resulted in the development of a range of concepts for acting "comprehensively". The exact nature of each of these concepts has, however, been primarily shaped by the organisational context in which they have arisen.

Two main interpretations of the CA concept are presented below:

A system-aware approach

Despite the lack of a common definition, there is a general understanding that the CA concept entails managing the interdependencies that exist between the various issue-areas that need to be addressed in international peace support efforts.[8] The fundamental notion is the need to look beyond organisational boundaries and focus on overarching results instead of the activities of individual actors. This basic understanding can be found – with some variations – in almost all descriptions of CA and equivalent terms.

The most basic point of departure is a systems perspective with two main components:

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[6] Statement by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary for UN Peacekeeping to the 'Challenges Project', London, UK, March 2005

[7] In addition to these, Friis and Jarmyr have pointed to several other motivations underpinning the desire to adopt comprehensive approaches to conflict and crisis management: Consistency – the need to send a message to the taxpayer and others actors that a controlled and coherent strategy is in fact being applied; Urgency – the realisation that operations have not made the progress intended and that new approaches need to be tested, CA being one of them; Politics – emphasis on civilian tools to help avoid military losses and to facilitate (military) exit strategies; Legitimacy – several actors working together increases the legitimacy of the operation and helps to sustain it even at temporary setbacks. Friis and Jarmys. 2008. *Comprehensive Approach: Challenges and opportunities in complex crisis management*. NUPI, security in practice no. 11, p 3

[8] Finish Ministry of Defence. 2008. *Seminar publication on Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, June 2008

a) There are many actors (including the host nation and local population) involved in a peace support effort and these are all, to varying degrees, interdependent in their individual efforts of establishing peace and security.

b) These dependencies need be managed through various degrees of harmonisation (from information sharing to coordination) as is possible and appropriate.

How harmonisation is de facto applied is, in this view, less relevant than an awareness of the system and understanding one's own role within the system.[9]

CA is, as such, not a "method" or "tool" for interaction. It is also less about the instruments and resources used than the attitudes and approaches an actor adopts towards the broader peace effort. At is most basic, CA is *thinking of ourselves as part of a system* and understanding the gains that can be made both at an individual and system-wide level by acting comprehensively. CA is also based on a *culture of cooperation*, generated by an understanding that managing interdependencies and harmonising joint or mutual objectives helps to achieve greater *efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.*

The CA, from this perspective, is therefore about:

- having a system-wide approach (to functions, areas, programmes etc)
- considering all actors of importance and seeking to reinforce and be reinforced by these
- promoting a flexible solution to cooperation and coordination
- striving to achieve sustainable solutions in collaboration with international and local actors.[10]

CA is, as such, not necessarily something that actors *share*. Rather, it is something that an actor, or preferably group of actors, *has*: a mindset where responsibility towards a system is a basis for achieving a greater effect.

This, very basic, interpretation, is a unifying denominator that forms the basis of most Comprehensive Approaches. Nevertheless, there is much, well-founded, criticism directed at leaving CA at this inherently fuzzy and limited interpretation, since it says very little about *how* the dependencies will be managed or how harmonisation will occur. As CA, at this level, is highly conceptual, it also makes it difficult to determine how to ensure development of the capabilities needed to meet the requirements of the approach – for example, within the area of Command and Control.

Structures and processes for coherent policy and action

As CA has gained ground at a conceptual level, efforts have been directed at making the concept more concrete and tangible. In most cases this has been done by interpreting it as different structures and processes that can be implemented to facilitate cooperation and cooperation between the actors engaged in a system. As a result, CA has most commonly come to be equated with *coordination* or *interaction* between various actors and organisations with the aim of generating coherent policy and action during periods of crises or disaster or in a post-conflict environment.

The opportunities for formal cooperation have nevertheless been dependent on the organisational context within which CA is implemented. The more concrete examples of this form of implementation have only been possible among actors who in some sense "control" the system in which CA is intended to be put into practice. That is, within a state or international organisation where statutes, laws and other agreements allow for the adoption of standardisations, structures and processes.

One example of this is the UN's Integrated Missions – a concept which includes the integration of all UN entities within a mission area. The development of the Integrated Missions concept was a response to the demands for peacekeeping reform following the failures of the 1990s to promote peace in, for example, Rwanda and has since its conception been gradually introduced to all the organisations' peace operations.[11]

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[9] Harriman and Lackenbauer. 2010. *Assessment of progress in multifunctional and multinational operations*. Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI; MNE, Multinational Experiment 6. 2010. *Harmonisation of Efforts: principles and guidelines*

[10] See Nilsson et al. 2008. *Contextualising the Comprehensive Approach: Elements of a Comprehensive Intervention*. Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI

[11] See for example Hull, C. 2008. *Integrated Missions: A Liberia Case Study*. Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI

The UK has been a *primus motor* for developing CA-esque concepts both at a national and international level. The UK also took CA forwards from a conceptual level to a present, workable structural model very early on. As within the UN, the UK was driven by experiences made during the 1990s, in the Balkans and Sierra Leone, but also from its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan after the turn of the century. These experiences had highlighted the need to better harmonise the activities that the British government was undertaking overseas.[12] The UK had already promoted a so-called "joined up government" on a range of issues, such as domestic security, terrorism and drug abuse during the 1990s. From 2003, cross-departmental collaboration on international efforts was also introduced. A range of concrete measures were undertaken, prominently by establishing joint funding mechanisms for conflict prevention, stabilisation and peacekeeping activities. This had the effect of forcing the three major departments working in these areas – the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID) – to seek agreement on resource allocation as well as setting joint targets for the efforts.[13] In 2004, a tri-departmental *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit* was established to enable cross-governmental assessment and planning. In 2007 the unit was renamed the Stabilisation Unit.[14] In the UK, CA has come to be defined as "*Commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation*".[15]

Another example of this form of structural CA can be found within NATO. Several Member States, including Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia, had already pushed for an adoption of CA within NATO in the first years of the 21st century.[16] Since 2006, NATO has adopted both a political guidance on CA and an action plan of how to implement NATO's contribution to CA.[17] The commitment to working comprehensively has also been afforded priority in NATO's new strategic concept from 2010.[18]

As NATO is in essence a defence alliance, the focus of the organisation has been on how the military contribution to CA can be coordinated with other international, civilian efforts, such as those of the EU or UN for example.[19] The development of CA within NATO has, however, suffered from some friction, since applying the new standards requires the consensus of all Member States. As a result, issues between Turkey and Greece, related to Cyprus, have prevented NATO from signing agreements with the EU on improving coordination between the organisations and taking CA forwards.[20]

NATO has not adopted a definition of CA but has reportedly chosen to understand the concept as "*an orchestration of communication of all activities in a country, coming to a well-defined and well-understood end state*".[21] The structural aspect of CA is evident in this understanding. CA is no longer simply the approach of an actor but something that exists in-between actors: "no single actor in a country is leading CA, but all actors contribute to it in such a way that their actions are all working towards that same end state."[22]

Descriptions and definitions of CA that take a clear stance by including words such as "integration" and "coherence" are also frequently on the receiving end of criticism. It has become a modern truism that even though most actors agree that there is a need to coordinate, few want to be coordinated and even less integrated into someone else's structures or processes.

The problem with this form of CA is that it is often considered too rigid. Different organisations and actors seldom share the exact same visualised end state. Joining up may therefore result in inappropriate one-size-

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[12] House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*, p 13

[13] MoD, FCO and DFID. House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*. Seventh report of session 2009-10, pp 12–13

[14] House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*. Seventh report of session 2009-10, p 14

[15] UK MoD. 2006. Joint Discussion Note 4/05, The Comprehensive Approach, p 5–7

[16] House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*, p 15

[17] House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*, p 44

[18] NATO. 2010. *Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*, Adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon, 19 November 2010

[19] Smith-Windsor, B. 2008. Hasten slowly: NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations: Making sense of the past and future prospects. NATO Defence College. Research Paper 38, July 2008

[20] House of Commons (UK). 2010. *The Comprehensive Approach: The point of war is not just to win but to make better peace*, p 46

[21] Dijk. G. 2010. "Comprehensive Approach: why it is a big NATO issue", CIOR symposium on *NATO's Comprehensive Approach and the Role of Reservists*, 1 August 2010, in Stavanger, Norway. Accessible at: http://www.cior.net/News/2010/COMPREHENSIVE-APPROACH-%E2%80%A6--and-why-it-is-a-big-NATO.aspx

[22] Dijk. G. 2010. *Comprehensive Approach: why it is a big NATO issue*

fits-all approaches that do not take local factors and individual actor's mandates into account. These forms of structures or processes aimed at generating coherent policy and action may therefore cause some actors, for which independence is essential, to distance themselves from working together.

At the same time, making CA more substantial by implementing processes for coordination is likely to be the only alternative where the effectiveness and sustainability intended can be achieved with any degree of predictability. Within this context, lack of collaboration is an indicator of failure of CA, while integrating policy or procedures is the highest measure of success in implementing CA.

"Comprehensive Approaches"

Given the fact that there is no universally accepted definition of CA, and that different states, organisations and actors have their own understanding of the concept, it may be more appropriate to speak of Comprehensive Approach*es* – in a plural indefinite article – rather than one common Comprehensive Approach.

Despite other differences in interpretation, it can be argued that the basic understanding – CA as a system-aware mindset – is the common mainstay behind these approaches. CA assumes an inclusive approach to other actors as well as a willingness to understand and relate to the broader system. Differences in comprehensive approaches beyond this common ground are defined and applied depending on the organisational context and the individual situation in which CA is being applied.

Both interpretations outlined above can be considered correct, and individually relevant and appropriate depending on the overarching circumstances. Few organisations or governments that have conducted research or concept development on CA have, however, stopped at understanding CA as the overarching mindset – in many cases CA has been understood as something in-between the two approaches described.

How CA is implemented will always be affected by the mandates, tasks and resources available, as well as other limiting factors. Within a state, CA will be about getting departments and agencies to cooperate. In large, multilateral organisations the focus is on integrating available instruments and functions.[23] When appropriate, CA can include harmonising efforts to the degree that enforced standardisations and regulations are introduced as a means to achieve common goals. At the same time, the overall aim of CA is not to primarily build new structures and hierarchies, but to achieve better outcomes and resolve a crisis in a sustainable way.[24]

2. Implementing Comprehensive Approaches

As argued, there are many interpretations of what exactly it means to act comprehensively and therefore also of how CA can be implemented. With regard to implementation, CA has gained the most "buzz" in relation to international peace and stability operations. Nevertheless, there is a range of levels on which CA can be implemented.

Studying the CA from an implementation perspective provides the opportunity to categorise comprehensive approaches accordingly:

- *National Approaches*, within states aiming at generating coherence between different governmental departments and agencies

- *Intra-agency Approaches*, within larger organisations that consist of several different departments, units and offices

- *Inter-agency Approaches*, within the system of national and international actors and organisations engaged in multilateral peace support or crisis management operations[25]

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[23] For more examples please see chapter 2.

[24] Ministry of Defence (Finland). 2008. Seminar publication on *Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, June 2008, p 30

[25] Seminar publication on *Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, June 2008, p 25; Rehman, S. 2009. 'Comprehensive Approach- ett pragmatiskt förhållningssätt till samarbete och koordinering vid internationella insatser i komplexa konflikter' (in Swedish), in Göranson et al. (ed). 2009. *Comprehensive Approach –*

- *International-local Approaches*, between the host government and the international community (in particularly donors).[26]

National Approaches

Several states have been experimenting with improving coherence between their own ministries or governmental departments with a view to improve the national management of domestic challenges as well as international operations.[27] Different terminology has been used to describe the application of CA at a national level; the most commonly used being the so-called *Whole-of-Government Approach*. One example of this type of endeavour is the Canadian "3D-approach", where 3D is short for *Defence, Diplomacy and Development*.[28]

No matter what name is used, these approaches have the purpose of harmonising the policy actions offered by various governmental departments on a certain issue. Their rationale is the assumption that a government's engagement in a conflict or disaster will cost fewer resources and be more likely to achieve greater and more sustainable impact if the ministries share the same understanding of the problem and have a shared and well-sequenced strategy to address it.[29]

National approaches seek to primarily harmonise the departments and agencies responsible for defence, foreign affairs and international development issues. In some cases this has also been stretched to include other ministries, such as Trade, Finance or Justice. The approaches usually entail having mechanisms in place for regular meetings to exchange information or discuss cooperation, but may also include the development of a joint national strategy towards a specific country or issue.[30] Integrated offices and joint funding mechanisms are also relied on, in for example the UK, to support coherence between ministries on certain international operations.[31] In its applied form, national CA approaches may result in a number of outputs, ranging from cross-government emergency action plans to the formation of "comprehensive" units in deployed peace operations.

At field level, the basic idea behind the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) used within NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan is an example of an applied Whole-of-Government Approach. The application of the PRT concept varies between provinces, each host state being able to adapt the structure according to its own prerequisites and organisational context. Each PRT is, nevertheless, encouraged to include, in addition to its military element, representatives from other ministries and agencies, e.g. political advisors, development advisors, police and rule-of-law advisors, as well as other civilian advisors, as appropriate, depending on the priorities of the given PRT. The co-location of these elements within the PRT is expected to improve Whole-of-Government coordination and lead to better results in the mission area.[32]

National approaches may be useful to create consistent national policies and canalise these externally. They are, nonetheless, not sufficient to address the entire complexity of situations of conflict or crisis (unless, perhaps, that crisis occurs within the state in question). Harmonisation with other actors, including the host state, is also required and Whole-of-Government Approaches should be seen as a part of broader Comprehensive Approaches.[33] That said, the relationship between multinational Comprehensive Approaches and national Whole-of-Government Approaches has been questioned. Some analysts argue that

Litteraturgenomgångar av begreppet och dess relation till ledarskap samt en empirisk intervjustudie. Swedish National Defence College, PM 28-12-2009, p 9

[26] De Coning. C, Friis, K. "Coherence and Coordination: Limits of the Comprehensive Approach". *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15 (2011)

[27] De Coning, C. et al. 2009. *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*. Security in Practice 8:2009. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, NUPI, p 5

[28] Other terms include *Integrated Approach*, *Jointness*, *Joined-Up Approaches*. In Swedish and Norwegian the terms *Allomfattande ansats* and *Helhetlig tillnaerming* can be used, but the two countries usually rely on the simple English term *Comprehensive Approach* to describe their efforts at inter-governmental harmonisation

[29] De Coning, C et al. 2009. *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*, NUPI, p 41

[30] De Coning, C et al. 2009. *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*, NUPI, p 41

[31] For example, the so-called "stabilisation Unit", integrating the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Department for International Development (DFID); and the "Stabilisation Aid Fund" and "Conflict Prevention Pool" (since 2009 only the "Conflict Pool" remains)

[32] De Coning, C et al. 2009. *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*, NUPI, p 29

[33] Van der Gaag et al. 2008. "Civil-military cooperation from a 3D perspective", in Rietjens and Myriame (eds) *Civil-military cooperation: a 24/4 joint effort for stability*. Ashgate Publishing, pp 27–28

the adoption of Whole-of-Government Approaches at a national level may in fact be counterproductive in seeking to work out multinational, whole-of-system CA.

National approaches are often developed with national concerns as a primary consideration. Establishing a Whole-of-Government Policy without consideration of the strategies of other actors and organisations that will be present in the field may make it more difficult to interact with these once in the field, as agencies arrive in the theatre with their hands already tied to national goals.[34] They may also be less flexible and adaptable to the local context and the host environment.[35] In addition to these concerns, national CA approaches have also been accused of being too state-centric, not paying enough attention to civil society or the private sector.[36] This is exemplified by the "D" in "3D-approach", referring to the Ministry of Development rather than Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or other civil-society groups engaged in development work.[37]

Intra-agency Approaches

Large international and regional organisations have their own corresponding approaches to those of individual states.

The UN's *Integrated Missions* concept is usually considered the most mature form of a CA to peace support operations. Integrated Missions bring together peacekeeping and peacebuilding in an integrated command structure where military and civilian components have separate functions but are joined up in a common strategy supported by coordinated implementation. The concept has been facilitated by the UN – being such a broad organisation and encompassing a wide range of the instruments necessary in CA: diplomatic, developmental, humanitarian and military. Because of its broadness, the UN is also, in reality, the only organisation by itself that is able to bring together all relevant actors in an integrated approach.[38]

The EU also possesses a rather unique array of instruments that can be used in response to a crisis. The EU's *Civil-Military Co-ordination* concept – CMCO – is an internally oriented concept aiming at coordinating the military, political and police instruments of a EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operation.[39] The CMCO concept is less developed than the UN's Integrated Missions, both at a conceptual level and with regard to implementation in the field. One of the reasons for this is that several EU Member States have developed their own individual approaches to CA, which has complicated the introduction of a single framework.[40] The EU is also working on developing a CA concept at the policy level.

Inter-agency Approaches

At inter-agency level CA is best described as a whole-of-system approach. Instead of seeking coherent and complementary approaches between governmental actors or within one organisation CA, at this level, addresses the relationships and structures that exist among and between the plethora of international and local actors and organisations engaged in a given context.[41]

This type of international, all-encompassing CA has rarely – if ever – been fully operationalised. Implementing CA at an inter-agency, whole-of-systems level is inherently complex. Unlike National and Inter-agency approaches there are few strategies or suggested working methods that concretise CA at this level. Therefore, Inter-agency CA is still very conceptual. Ad hoc conditions in line with an intra-agency

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[34] Seminar publication on *Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, June 2008, p 5

[35] De Coning, C et al. 2009. *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*. NUPI, p 41

[36] Van der Gaag et al. 2008. "Civil-military cooperation from a 3D perspective", in Rietjens and Myriame (eds) *Civil-military cooperation: a 24/4 joint effort for stability*. Ashgate Publishing, pp 27–28; Verstappen, S. 20009. *The Integrated Approach to peace, security and development: A reality check from the field.* Study commissioned by Cordaid, p 16

[37] Verstappen, S. 20009. *The Integrated Approach to peace, security and development: A reality check from the field.* Study commissioned by Cordaid, p 16

[38] Hull, Cecilia. 2008. *Integrated Missions: A Liberia Case Study*. Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI, p 10

[39] Council of Europe. 2003. *Civil-military Co-ordination (CMCO)*. 14457/03

[40] Hanssen, Måns. 2010. *Civil-military interaction in the European Union: applying a Comprehensive Approach to CSDP operations*. Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI, p 41

[41] Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. 2009. *3C Conference Report – Coherent, Coordinated Complementary Conference – Improving results in fragile and conflict situations*, 19–20 March. Geneva, Switzerland, p 8

CA have arisen in the field; nevertheless, at present there are no well-developed case-study examples of inter-agency CA. The main reason for this is simply the fact that CA, at this level, is yet so abstract that it is hard to tell when it has been achieved.

What we know about inter-agency CA has primarily arisen from the context of concept development and experimentation, e.g. the Multinational Experimentation (MNE) series. Theories of how various factors affect this type of CA have, for example, been developed at this conceptual level. The "Harmonisation of Effort" concept developed within the MNE 6 is one such example.[42]

Concept development on Comprehensive Approaches at inter-agency level suggest the need to address the relationship between actors both at strategic level (pre-engagement analysis, planning and monitoring) as well as in the field. The pre-conditions for acting "comprehensively" in these different contexts vary significantly. At the strategic, headquarters, level actors may manage to integrate their activities into one coherent strategy. Nevertheless, this is usually very challenging, since there is a tendency for a strategic deficit in international operations, i.e. insufficient strategic ground to enable such cooperation between actors. If there is a lack of a CA at strategic level, implementing CA in the field rarely amounts to more than coordination between activities that are part of different, already existing, strategies.[43]

Attempts have been made to bridge the divisions between Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Systems Approaches. The "3C-approach" – *Coherent, Coordinated, Complementary* – launched by the Swiss government has sought to move beyond the 3D concept to call upon a broader group of actors: the international community, bilateral donors and partner countries – to work to jointly define and implement coordinated activities to reach shared state-building and peacebuilding objectives at both headquarters and in the field.[44] Such approaches are admirable but are still limited to a rather exclusive group of state actors.

In comparison with, e.g. the UN or EU, NATO has far more limited opportunities for achieving the desired effects through an intra-agency approach. The organisation is restricted to the (politico-)military realm and the Alliance's CA ambitions therefore require inter-agency approaches. Nevertheless, the recognition of the challenges of inter-agency approaches have lead NATO to focus on collaboration with other organisations as well as to awaken the idea that NATO should develop civilian capabilities of its own.[45]

International-local Approaches

The category of International-local Approaches should probably really be included as part of the inter-agency classification. Ensuring local ownership and coherence with organisations and authorities in the host country is crucial in ensuring sustainable effects and efficiency in any peace or crisis management operation. At the same time, International-local Approaches deserve to be highlighted in their own right.

The implementation of International-local Approaches have, in most cases, concerned collaboration between local governmental actors and international organisations (primarily those within the UN system). In some cases, local civil-society organisations have also been included. Examples of this type of approach include commonly agreed national strategic frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategies that many developing states negotiate with the World Bank.[46] These strategies usually serve to generate focus and convergence among donors and provide strategic direction for the flow of development aid. In the case of Liberia, which may be a prime example of implementation of an International-local Approach, the Poverty Reduction Strategy has formed the basis for the common UN-development assistance framework,

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[42] The harmonisation of effort concept is based on understanding the multifunctional environment as a marketplace where actors barter, trade and work together for mutual benefit based in objects and activities of common interest. Harmonisation is an ongoing activity rather than a destination or end state to be reached. Actors are not "integrated" but loosely coupled in negotiating constellations. The system is not based on principles of coherence but on a high degree of self-awareness among each actor ensuring that they understand what assets they have to offer that might be of interest to other actors (e.g. information, resources, capabilities) and what assets other actors have that are of interest to themselves. See, Logos Technologies for MNE, Multinational Experiment 6. *Harmonizing Effort through Interaction.* Draft, 8 January 2010, p 14; MNE, Multinational Experiment 6. *Harmonisation of Efforts: principles and guidelines.* May 2010

[43] Verstappen, S. 20009. *The Integrated Approach to peace, security and development: A reality check from the field.* Study commissioned by Cordaid

[44] Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. 2009. 3C conference report – Coherent, Coordinated Complementary conference – Improving results in fragile and conflict situations, 19–20 March. Geneva, Switzerland, p 8

[45] NATO, "Final Proceedings Report", *NATO Comprehensive Approach Roundtable*, Washington DC, 21 May 2009

[46] De Coning. C, Friis, K. 'Coherence and Coordination: Limits of the Comprehensive Approach'. *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15 (2011)

which directs the work of all UN agencies, funds and programmes engaged in Liberia, including the UN peacekeeping mission.[47]

3. CA as a Military C2 Issue

CA is, by its very nature, a policy or attitude and therefore belongs to the conceptual part of any military capability. As a system-wide approach, it nevertheless affects all the basic military capabilities[48], in particular C2 and Intelligence and Information.

The nature of C2-related requirements in any given situation can be considered a product of the operational environment, the military tasks at hand, the methods to be used and the availability of resources. Missions encompassing civilian and military instruments jointly aspiring to address security in its broader sense are usually referred to as "multifunctional" or "multidimensional" operations. Due to their multifunctional nature, in these environments C2 require collaboration with other actors – based on a perception of mutual benefit and interdependencies. CA is implicitly about achieving focus and convergence[49] in multifunctional operations. As such, CA is an intrinsic C2 issue.

At a general level, multifunctional environments which require the application of CA carry some characteristics which affect C2. These include, for example, that military operations tend to be shorter-term contributions to more extensive and lengthier operations; that the situation at large requires the application of a multitude of instruments; that military operations are usually complementary to other activities and undertaken to enable these and to achieve other actors' objectives.[50] All these factors entail that no single actor in a peace operation can limit themselves to plan only for their own sector or their own programmes. An essential transformation to C2 is therefore that *military C2 needs to, a higher degree than previously, be based on collaboration with actors outside of the military system.*

Most likely, all components of the military C2 process need to be developed to be able to meet the demands of a CA – from the stage of trying to make sense of any situation and forming a will to act upon it, through providing focus and convergence to our operations in accordance with this sense-making, to monitoring and control of the effectiveness of the action taken.[51]

CA is therefore a C2 issue both in general terms – how should we ensure that our system operates in the best way possible within a multifunctional environment?, and in the more specific – how do we cooperate with other actors engaged in our operational areas (such as Afghanistan)?

CA – a C2 process based on collaboration[52]

Previous studies made both internationally and in Sweden indicate that there are a range of challenges to military C2 and the individual stages of the C2 process associated with CA. There are reasons to believe that improved focus and convergence cannot be achieved without more open collaboration between stakeholders throughout the C2 process. The C2 process must therefore become a much more inclusive process. This implies a willingness to work together, as well as an understanding of and respect for the role of ones own function in a multifunctional environment in relation to that of other actors. Generally, this requires an improved knowledge of other actors, since a lack of understanding for other stakeholders' mandated tasks, resources, approaches, cultures and objectives will likely lead to friction and therefore impede collaboration. System-wide awareness is therefore an essential tool in the C2 process.

Where appropriate and feasible, CA should therefore form the basis of strategic military analysis, planning, execution (including monitoring) and evaluation. Military personnel should, at all levels and times, consider collaboration with other actors as a starting point for any stage of the strategic C2 process. A

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[47] See Hull. 2008. Integrated Missions: A Liberia Case Study. Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI

[48] Command and Control, Intelligence and information, Effect, Mobility, Protection, Endurance. See the Swedish Armed Forces Doctrine for Joint Operations (2005)

[49] "Focus and Convergence" (Alberts and Hayes) and "Direction and Coordination" (Brehmer) are both terms used to express the function of Command and Control with other words

[50] See Nilsson, Hull, Derblom and Egnell. 2008. *Contextualising the Comprehensive Approach: the elements of a Comprehensive Intervention.* Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI

[51] Pallin, Krister and Lagerlöf, Johan. 1998. *Högre 2 – Doktrin och ledning*, FOA

[52] This entire section is based on chapter three in Nilsson, Hull, Derblom and Egnell. 2008. *Contextualising the Comprehensive Approach: the elements of a Comprehensive Intervention.* Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI

stakeholder analysis should form part of the military strategic process to provide the basic understanding of why, how and to what degree collaboration with other actors needs to occur at all levels. Similarly, key personnel at lower levels should, where possible, partake in higher-level C2 processes in order to create as good an understanding as possible of the broader picture.

Collective Analysis: improved sense-making
Where common analysis is lacking or defunct, actors may make different interpretations of what constitutes root causes in a conflict or crisis situation. This may in turn result in different starting points for staking out courses of action to deal with the issue. Common conflict analysis and planning at strategic and operational levels reinforces a culture of collaboration, provides for deeper and more qualitative understanding and facilitates mutually reinforcing activities. Rigid processes that emanate from a single domain (e.g. the military) do not allow for the inclusiveness needed to function in a CA context.[53]

Inputs to collaborative analysis may range from expert participation to reviews of frameworks and plans of other actors. A stakeholder analysis, in which different actors are assessed in terms of the relevance to and degree of support of the intervention, is one of the important areas of analysis which requires this type of input.[54]

Challenges to achieving collaborative analysis are primarily based in lack of both ability and willingness to exchange information, the broad variety of methods for analysis used, the different levels of priority afforded to analysis among actors and a frequent lack of local input. In addition, analysis is often regarded as a separate and distinct step in a strategic process whereby planners do not, to a sufficient degree, partake in the analytical process, therefore making it more difficult to translate the results into concrete plans of action. There also tends to be a disconnection between the strategic level and field levels in terms of continuous feedback on analysis issues. Strategic level analysis therefore needs to ensure that core assumptions are shared with those closer to the field.[55] Analysis should ideally also include the perspectives of various local actors. The need for a joint understanding of the situation is both horizontal and vertical in CA.

Collective planning: improved strategic direction
With regard to planning, the problem of the so-called *strategic deficit* (an insufficient strategic basis for field coordination) has already been mentioned. Collaboration in strategic planning can help to overcome such deficits and also provide a framework for collaboration in the field.

Since planning for action to be taken by individual organisations have usually taken place within the framework of respective actors' own planning processes, other actors' plans and intentions have rarely had sufficient impact on the planning. Part of the problem is that questions such as "what else is going on?" and "how can I help to facilitate these activities?" are rarely asked, since each actor is preoccupied with managing their own activities. Other factors include the differing time perspectives and focal areas of actors as well as asymmetry in resources and methods available for planning.

Planning with a comprehensive mindset is important to achieving consensus among relevant actors for whatever the overarching aim of the intervention should be. Planning is a way to translate strategic direction into action, transitioning far-reaching visions and end state into concrete plans. Both research and lessons from concept development and experimentation indicate a high relevance and importance of collective, multifunctional planning for both "filling in the blanks" and achieving better strategic linkage, agility and coordination prospects.[56] Such processes set the scene for actual agreement and coordination of

[53] Multinational Experimentation Series (MNE5) *Cooperative Implementation Planning, Management and Evaluation (CIP/CIME) Major Integrating Event*, April 7–18 2008 at the Swedish Armed Forces Joint Concept Development and Experimentation Centre in Enköping, Sweden

[54] Multinational Experiment 5 (MNE5). 2008. Cooperative Implementation Planning, Management and Evaluation – Outline Concept, Draft, Version 2.5

[55] Multinational Experimentation 5 (MNE5) series, *Multinational Interagency Strategic Planning* (MNISP) *Major Integrating Event* (MIE), February 11–15, Paris, France; Multinational Experimentation Series (MNE5), Cooperative Implementation Planning, Management and Evaluation (Cip/Cime) Major Integrating Event, April 7–18 2008, Enköping, Sweden

[56] Smith, Dan. 2004. *Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together – Overview Report of the joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding*. International Peace Research Institute, Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Multinational Experimentation Series (MNE5) Cooperative Implementation Planning, Management and Evaluation (CIP/CIME) Major Integrating Event, April 7–18 2008 at the Swedish Armed Forces Joint Concept Development and Experimentation Centre in Enköping, Sweden

ends, ways and means, as well as providing the foundation for the requisite long-term thinking needed in contemporary crises management and peacebuilding.

The many actors operating in a crisis zone have their own plans for carrying out their individual mandates. Already existing plans and programmes in the intervention environment should be considered a core input for military planning within CA, in an effort to support and be reinforced by the activities of the other actors.

Collective execution: improved coordination and direction of activities

With regard to collective execution, perceptions and criteria for what effective collaboration in the field looks like vary greatly between actors and organisations. Implementing CA often requires a range of mechanisms for collaboration at field level; however, there is therefore no single model for how collaboration in execution should be conducted. Rather, collective execution tends to require a high degree of ad hocism. While not always desirable, such approaches can be positive since they are generally designed to meet specific field-level needs.[57] The lack of predictability in such efforts nevertheless assumes a degree of adaptability. For this reason, commanders and subordinates need to be able to adapt operations in accordance with prevailing dynamics in order to find pragmatic opportunities for collaboration. For coordination mechanisms to fulfil such flexibility the decision-making authority needs to be decentralised to field level – facilitating swift and appropriate responses in tune with the situation at hand.[58]

Commanders, as well as other military representatives, should always be prepared to participate in different working groups and common forums with civilians, where appropriate and requested. In the absence of such forums, military commanders should take the initiative to create appropriate arrangements for collaboration and information exchange. The use of mutual liaisons, common implementation plans (based on strategic directives) as well as joint media and information activities are also activities that promote CA.[59] As does respect for other actors' activities as well as openness regarding one's own objectives.

It is important to remember that maintaining full independence from military and political actors is of high priority for some of the actors – such as humanitarians – with which the military may want to collaborate. This is particularly true in the field. Supporting this independence to the level necessary does not contrast Comprehensive Approaches but should be considered part of a well-developed system-aware understanding.

Collective monitoring and evaluation: the essence of a system-aware approach

The evaluation (in military terms often called assessment) of multifunctional operations places a stronger emphasis on the evaluation of effects and results rather than the evaluation of activities and output that are more common in traditional military operations: this makes monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in a CA environment more challenging.

The modern operational environment is complex and rapidly changing, which makes agility, as well as a good understanding of the dynamics of the conflict, essential. The overarching political objectives of contemporary peace and stability operations (such as "sustainable peace" or "stability") are also very difficult to evaluate. In addition, there are often unclear or contradictory polices, objectives and implementation plans; equivocal or absent theories of change; few or no indicators and/or gaps in available baselines.

Causal links between, for example, actors' activities and effects and changes to a conflict environment are difficult to prove. In complex operations, this is even more challenging due to the vast number of actors and activities. Due to the mutually supportive, or destructive, nature of such environments, the M&E of military efforts cannot occur separately from the M&E of other activities and programmes. A military response is always a part of a system of influence and it is also necessary to look to other sectors, such as development activities, to assess any operational effects.

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[57] Hull. 2008. Integrated Missions: a Liberia Case Study. Swedish Defence Research Agency. FOI-R—2555—SE

[58] Derblom. M, Hagström-Frisell. E and Schmidt.J. 2008. *UN-EU-AU Coordination in Peace Operations in Africa.* Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI): Stockholm

[59] Derblom. M, Hagström-Frisell. E and Schmidt.J. 2008. *UN-EU-AU Coordination in Peace Operations in Africa.* Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI): Stockholm

Planning for M&E should start early on in the C2 process and be undertaken at various levels. This is because the basis for M&E rests in analysis and planning, where the baseline is established and measurable targets and indicators are formulated. Targets and indicators should then be reviewed throughout the process to ensure that they remain relevant in relation to changes in the environment. Since it is unlikely that all actors will allow their M&E to be fully guided by a single overarching framework, there is a need to create flexible ways to incorporate M&E results into common analysis. Prior agreements between relevant actors at a strategic level can facilitate this process.

The absence of system-wide evaluation frameworks poses a problem for collective M&E in complex operations and therefore also for CA. Civil-military collaboration in evaluation, including during the vital planning phase, is therefore essential to assess progress during the various stages of an operation.

4. Summary and concluding remarks

Despite being frequently used within international conflict or crisis management, there is no universal agreement of what the term CA actually entails or how it should be defined. A range of interpretations exists, but what they entail differs.

At its most common denominator, CA is a mindset. It includes recognition of oneself as part of a system and an understanding that effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability can be achieved if the interdependencies that exist within this system are responsibly managed. Attempts to concretise and implement CA have nevertheless usually resulted in the establishment of structures and processes for coordination and collaboration. How these structures or processes are outlined depends on the nature of each system and what possibility there is to direct and coordinate the system. A difference, therefore, has to be made between National level CA (within a state or government), intra-agency level CA (within an organisation, e.g. the UN) and inter-agency level CA (encompassing all actors engaged in an international peace or crisis-management operation).

CA can be understood and implemented in range of ways, depending on the resources available and the degree to which the practitioner is in control of the system in which a CA is intended to be implemented. As such, there are several models for implementing and understanding CA. The different approaches exist because they fulfil different functions, use different resources and have varying goals and ambitions.

Since there is no uniform understanding of CA, it is essential to generate an understanding of how the various interpretations vary and what effect each interpretation has on how CA should be implemented, assessed and prepared for. One important conclusion is therefore that it is more useful to speak of Comprehensive Approach*es* rather than *one* universal CA.

For the military, it is important to reflect on how the implementation of CA affects military capabilities, such as C2. This report has highlighted that the C2 process needs to be permeated by CA at all levels and that a system-aware mindset, as well as recognition of the need to cooperate with civilian actors, must form a basis for analysis, planning, execution and M&E.

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Focus and convergence through a Comprehensive Approach:
But which among the many?

Cecilia Hull Wiklund
16th ICCRTS, Québec

FOI

A new type of C2 approach

- C2 of all participants in multifunctional environments is not possible

- Rather, focus and convergence will need to arise from a mere *willingness* to work together…

- …based on an understanding of interdependencies and a mutual perception of the benefit of working together
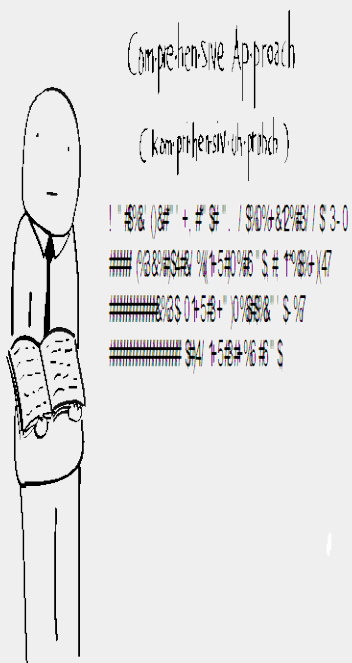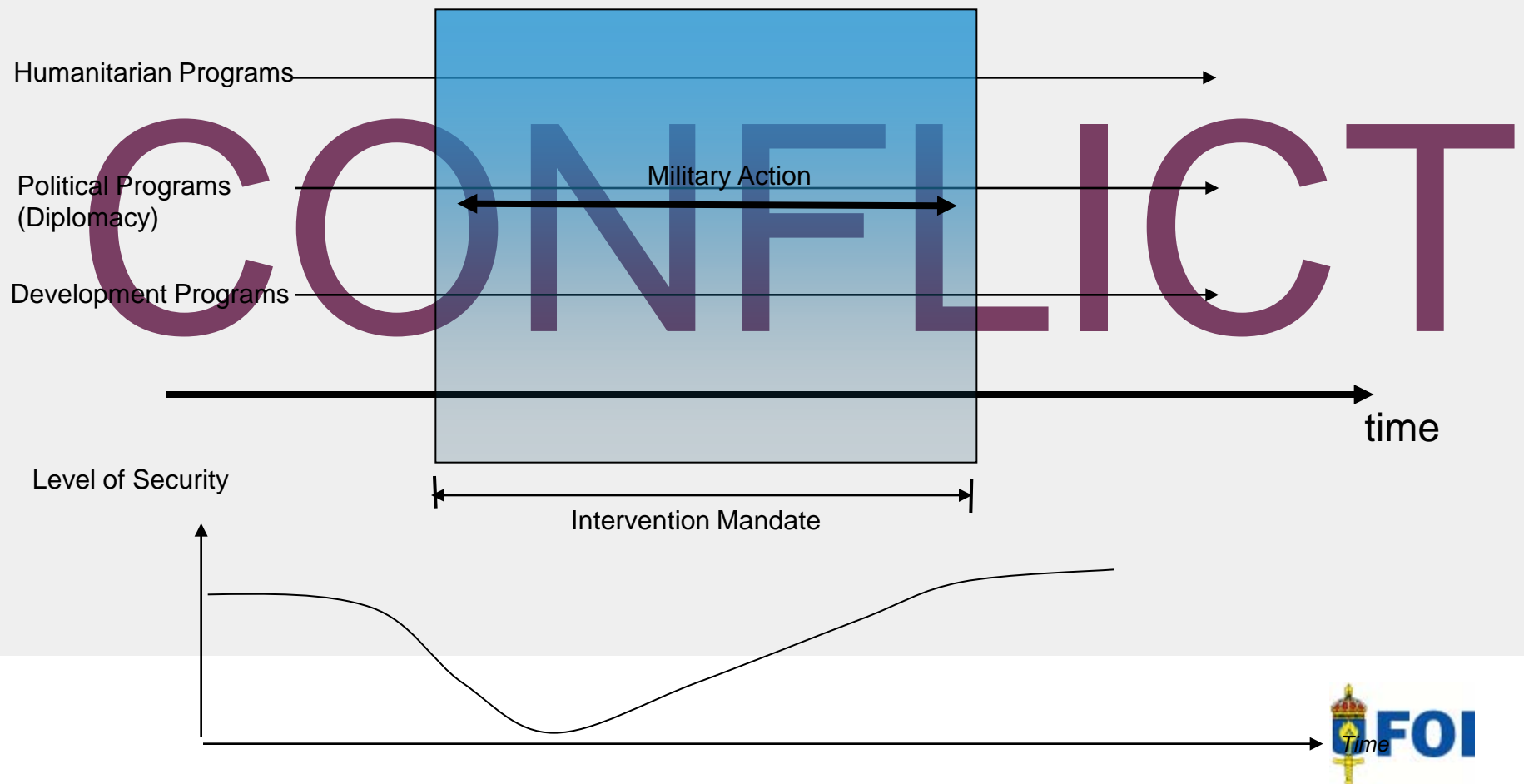
FOI

The Comprehensive Approach (CA)

Why a Comprehensive Approach?

Why is CA a C2 issue?
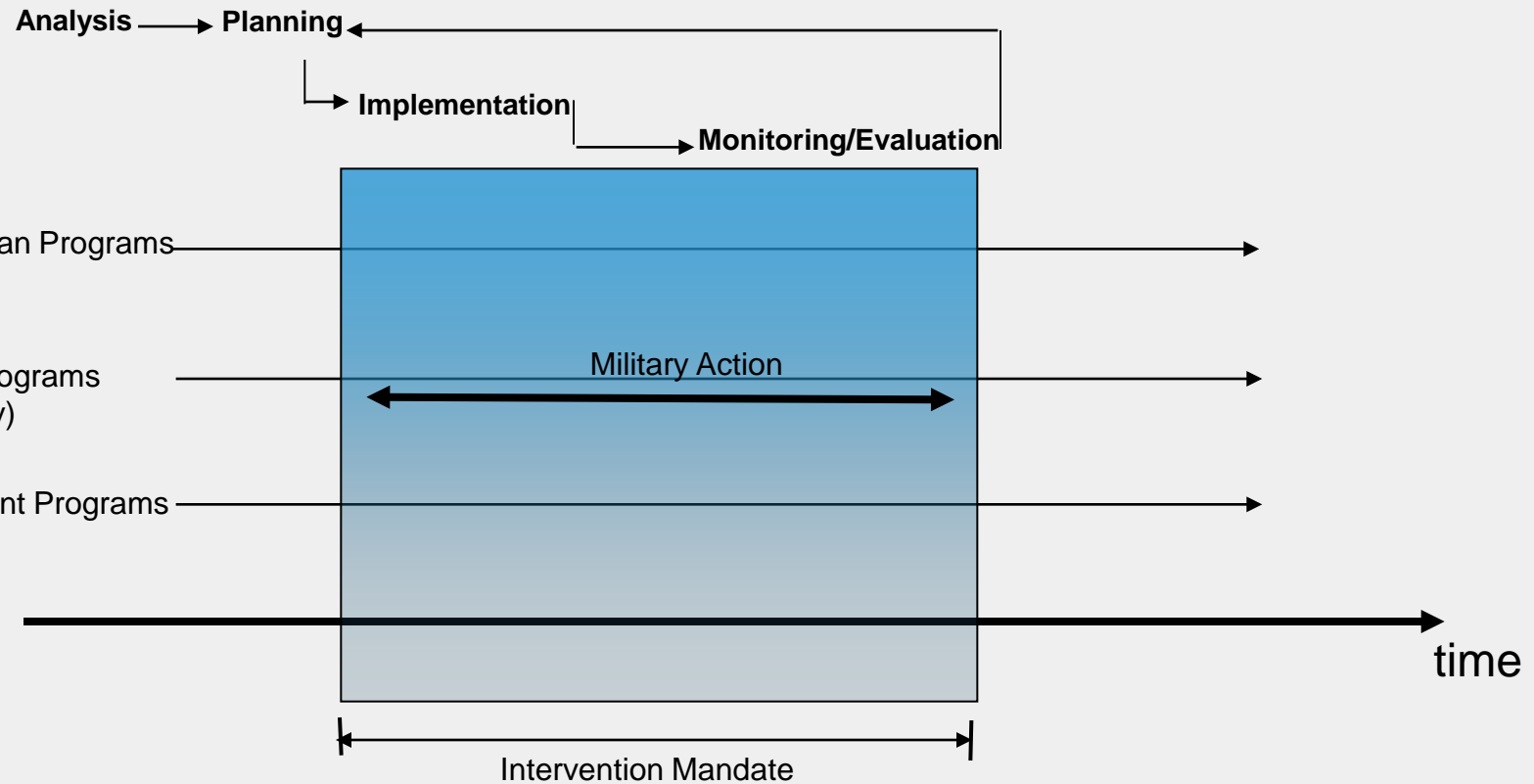
Different types of CA

- Many challenges to "working together"

- Several types of Comprehensive Approaches has arisen, depending on circumstances and context

- Two main interpretations of how CA should be implemented:

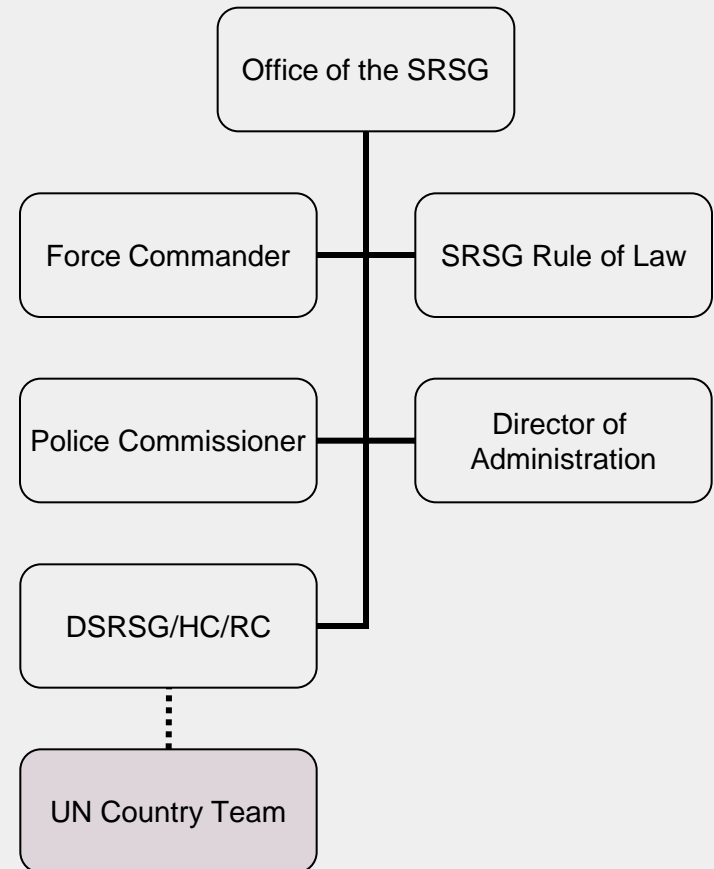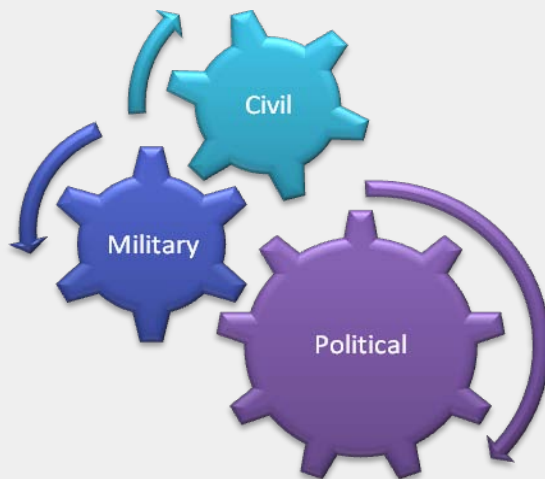 - System awareness

  - Coherent policy and action

FOI

Two main interpretations:

CA as system awareness	CA as coherent policy and action
Mindset, culture, attitude	Structure or process
Understanding ourselves as part of a system	Acting to promote coherency
Something that an actor *has*	Something that actors *share*
Too fuzzy?	Too rigid?

FOI

Example: UN's Integrated Missions

• Integrated Missions:

  - **Process** (Integrated Missions Planning Process)

  - **Structure** (Integrated Chain of Command)

Office of the SRSG

Force Commander

SRSG Rule of Law

Police Commissioner

Director of Administration

DSRSG/HC/RC

UN Country Team

FOI

But which CA?...

- Which type of CA that can be applied depends on how much control can be asserted over the system within which a Comprehensive Approach is to be implemented

Examples of implementation

- *National level* (within states & governments)
- *Intra-agency level* (within one organisation)
- *Inter-agency level* (between several actors and organisations)
  - EU Civil-Military Coordination Concept
  - Kosovo? Haiti? Afghanistan?
  - NATO CA?

In sum..

- A Comprehensive Approach is needed throughout the entire C2 process of analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation

- Several types of Comprehensive Approaches can be applied to each step

- Which one is applicable depends on how much "control" can be asserted over the system you are acting in

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Questions?